

History of Alabama Association of Marriage And Family Counselors

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Abstract

This paper describes the development of the Alabama Association of Marriage and Family Counselors (ALAMFC). The organizational structure, goals, and history are included.

Introduction

When ALAMFC was formed, marriage and family counseling was receiving much attention from various groups. For example, the Alabama legislature enacted the Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy on April 8, 1997 (Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy, 2000), the year after the Alabama Association of Marriage and Family Counselors became a division of the Alabama Counseling Association and the International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors.

Formation of the Division

ALAMFC was the brain child of a group of dedicated practitioners who met in the lobby of a hotel at the 1995 Alabama Counseling Association (ACA) Fall Conference. They talked about current trends and the need for an organization specifically for marriage and family counselors under the umbrella of the Alabama Counseling Association (ALCA). Among those present were, Ken Noram, Sandy Manguson, (S. Manguson, personal communication, February 7, 2007) Harriet Schaffer, Junior Dunham, Carol Ohme, Windell Williamson and

Susan Williamson (H. Schaffer, personal communication, August 9, 2006).

For the eleven years since 1996 ALAMFC has served from approximately 150 to 200 members each year. The purpose of the organization has remained unchanged. It includes

“fostering programs of education in the field of marriage and family counseling, stimulating, promoting, and conducting programs of research in the field of marriage and family counseling; conducting scientific and educational meetings and conferences; establishing contacts with other organizations for scientific and educational pursuits; and examining conditions which create difficulties for marriage and families, and working to remove them. (Alabama Association of Marriage and Family Counselors, 1999).

Organizational Structure

The Executive Council consists of a President, President-Elect, Immediate Past-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and other officers the Executive Council may consider necessary. A list of the Past-Presidents can be found in Table 1.

Bylaws

The AAMFC Bylaws were approved by the membership in 1996 at the ALCA Fall Conference in Birmingham (AAMFC, 1999). They contained ten articles; name and purpose, membership, meetings, executive council, officers, committees, national representation, amendments, parliamentary authority, and dissolution.

They were amended in 1999 on four points: (a) call the Board of Directors the Executive Council, (b) membership of the council must conform to ALCA's bylaws, (c) remove one Member-at-Large for every 50 members of the division and make the elective officers and their corresponding terms align with those of ALCA, (d) and change the definition of a quorum. (AAMFC, 1999).

Chronology of History

Ken Noram was elected the first president (1995-1996) and Karla Carmichael was the first secretary. The By-laws were approved in 1996 and ALMFC received its charter from the International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors, a division of the American Counseling Association that year at the American Counseling Association Conference. A delegation of officers and members from ALAMFC attended the American Counseling Association conference to receive the national charter from IAMFC (H. Schaffer, personal communication, August 9, 2006). IAMFC is "a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA), which embraces a multicultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of the families we serve" (International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors, 2007).

Nineteen ninety-nine was a busy year for ALAMFC. Dr. Kaplan, president of IAMFC, was the guest speaker at the first luncheon at the ALCA Fall Conference and also did two content sessions. After he spoke, the bylaws were revised to be in line with those of the ALCA and IAMFC (Alabama Association of Marriage and Family Counselors, 1999).

ALAMFC worked in conjunction with the State of Alabama Department of Human Resources to present training sessions for working with adoptive families. Also, in 1999 three members of the ALAMFC Executive Council were nominated to the ALCA Professional Standards Committee for membership on Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling (ABEC). They were W. Dunham, Jr., Karole Ohme and Harriet Schaffer. The Professional Standards Committee, with Meg Smith as chair, met and selected the names of two people, Karole Ohme and Harriet Schaffer, to send to the Governor of Alabama for consideration. Harriet Schaffer was appointed by the Governor to ABEC in 2001. She served until 2006.

The next year, 2000, W. Dunham, Jr. president, again invited the president of IAMFC to come to Alabama's Annual Conference. Patricia Stevens, the IAMFC president, was in private practice in Birmingham before moving to Colorado. President Dunham wrote in the newsletter, "IAMFC President, Patricia Stevens, will be our guest speaker. Be sure to sign up early so you can take advantage of the free lunch, learn an exciting presentation from one of Alabama's own, and be treated to fellowship and dialogue with your colleagues." (Alabama Association of Marriage and Family Counselor News, Fall, 2000).

From the first, interest must have been high among ALAMFC members. The minutes of the April, 1997 meeting showed that income for May included \$1360.00 from dues and \$1237.00 from the workshop (Minutes of ALAMFC Board, April 1997). Doris Wood was the second Secretary-Treasurer and her minutes show a very active board (D. Wood, personal communication, April 24,

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2007). Some of the early activities included a fall luncheon and two workshops per year, research and scholarship awards, and advocacy for insurance and favorable legislation for practitioners. Services to the community include monetary support for needy organizations. Valecia Asberry was Secretary-Treasurer during the busy 2001 year, then Harriet Schaffer because Secretary-Treasurer and has served in that position with seven presidents.

Topics and Presenters at Workshops and Luncheons

A complete list of presenters was not available at the time of this writing. However the excellence of topics and presenters are found in Table 2.

Summary

The Alabama Association for Marriage and Family Counselors has served Alabama marriage and family counselors well for eleven years. The division has provided its 150 to 200 members with excellent continuing education opportunities and advocated for professional counselors. The future of the association includes continuation of the services and goals of the past. ALAMFC will provide leadership in couple and family therapy training, skill building, and research through workshops and presentations at state and national conferences. Goals include emphasis on what works with couples and families and recognizing and working with the diversity of family systems. We will utilize technology to provide announcements of workshops, contact members and the executive council, and place a Web page

on the ALCA Web site. New services will evolve as the division continues to evaluate the needs of members and respond to those needs in a proactive way.

This brief history was written with the assistance of members, minutes, newsletters, and other documents. No names were omitted purposefully. Many people contributed to the growth of ALAMFC and all their contributions are appreciated. ♦

AUTHOR NOTE

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Table 1**ALCA Past-Presidents**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Past-President</i>
1995-1996	Ken Norem
1996-1997	Karole Ohme (moved up following resignation)
1997-1998	Karole Ohme
1998-1999	Annette Mahan (H. Schaffer became president in September 1998)
1999-2000	Harriet Schaffer
2000-2001	Junior Dunham
2001-2002	Doris Wood
2002-2003	Necoal Driver
2003-2004	Mary Barr
2004-2005	Kelly Driver
2005-2006	Brenda James
2006-2007	Glenda Reynolds
2007-2008	Robert Hunt

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Table 2

Topics/Presenters at ALAMFC Workshops and Luncheons

Year	Presenter(s)	Topic
1998	Ray Beevar	Constructivist Approach to Marriage/Family Therapy
1999	David Kaplan	President of IAMFC, Fall Conference Presentation
2000	Richard Delaney	Troubled Transplants (Co-Sponsored with DHR)
2000	Nick Stinnett	Secrets of Strong Families
2000	Patricia Stevens	President of IAMFC- Integrating Family Work within The School Setting
2001	Bob Wendorf	Diagnosis and Treatment of Borderline/Narcissistic Couples
2002	Winston Schepps Doris Wood W. Dunham, Jr.	Three Approaches to Working Out Conflicts with Families
2003	Connie LaMonte	Helping Families with End of Life Issues
2004	Tarin Majure	Art Therapy
2005	Connie LaMonte	Creative Techniques in Counseling: Using Music in A Therapeutic Setting
2006	David Creamer Wesley Goodenough Poppy Moon Brad Willis	Families in Need: Family Violence
2006	Micheal Semon	The Power of Friedman's Fables
2007	Marvin Jenkins	Ethics